



LAMAR UNIVERSITY
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Academic Affairs

MAPP 02.02.58

AREA: Faculty

Ombuds

I. POLICY

- A. This policy establishes and describes the role and responsibilities, as well as the process to select and appoint, the Lamar University Faculty and Staff Ombuds.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. The Lamar University Faculty and Staff Ombuds is a designated neutral or impartial dispute resolution practitioner whose major function is to provide confidential, informal, impartial, and independent conflict management and resolution assistance to LU faculty and staff. As a designated confidential, neutral, and independent resource, the Ombuds is neither an advocate for any individual nor the University. Instead, the Ombuds advocate for fairness, acts as a source of information and referral, aids in answering an individual's questions, and assists in the resolution of concerns and critical situations. By informally facilitating the resolution of conflicts and addressing questions or concerns raised by LU faculty and staff, the Ombuds supplements—but does not replace—the University's existing resources for formal conflict resolution.
- B. The Ombuds shall adhere to the principles outlined in the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice advocated by the International Ombuds Association (IOA). Faculty and staff are encouraged to visit the IOA website (<https://www.ombudsassociation.org/>) and review the IOA Code of Ethics and the IOA Standards of Practice to learn more about what the Ombuds can and cannot do.

III. DEFINITION

- A. **Ombuds.** The Ombuds is a designated independent, impartial, informal, and confidential resource with whom LU faculty and staff members can voice concerns, evaluate situations, organize thoughts, and examine possibilities for resolving disputes and seeking options for a fair and equitable outcome.

IV. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The Ombuds is independent in structure, function, and appearance to the highest degree possible within the University. The Ombuds is independent of the University's formal administrative structure and strives to consider all sides of an issue in an impartial and objective manner. The Ombuds cannot impose solutions but identifies options and strategies for resolution of disputes.

- B. The Ombuds, as a designated neutral resource, remains unaligned and impartial. The Ombuds strives to promote procedural fairness in the content and administration of LU's practices, processes, and policies. The Ombuds does not engage in any situation that could create a conflict of interest.
- C. The Ombuds holds all communications with those seeking assistance in strict confidence and does not disclose confidential communications unless given permission to do so, except as required by law, or where, in the judgment of the Ombuds, there appears to be imminent risk of serious harm.
- D. The Ombuds, as an informal resource, does not participate in any formal adjudicative or administrative procedure related to concerns brought to his/her/their attention. The Ombuds provides information relating to university policies and procedures and works to facilitate the resolution of problems and complaints through informal conversations and processes, but does not replace or supersede other University appeal or grievance procedures.

V. INFORMAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

- A. Faculty and staff members must make a bona fide effort to resolve an issue collegially by discussing their concerns with their Director, Chair, and Dean. If this does not prove satisfactory, faculty and staff members may contact and schedule an appointment with the University Ombuds. The Ombuds serves as a confidential, neutral, informal, and independent resource for employee concerns and conflicts at the University. As an independent resource for problem resolution, the Ombuds works to ensure that all members of the faculty and staff are treated equitably and fairly. The Ombuds can provide confidential and informal assistance to help resolve issues related to both the workplace and academic environments.
- B. If informal resolution is neither possible nor satisfactory in the judgment of the concerned faculty or staff member after consulting with the Ombuds, then the faculty or staff member may file a formal grievance pursuant to procedures described in the University's employee grievances policy (MAPP 06.05.06).

VI. APPOINTMENT

- A. The LU President will appoint the Ombuds from a list of tenured faculty members compiled by an ad hoc Ombuds selection committee composed of three (3) faculty members and two (2) administrators. The President of the Faculty Senate, in consultation with Faculty Senators and Staff Council Officers, shall select the three (3) faculty members to serve on the ad hoc selection committee; the Provost shall choose the two (2) administrators to serve on the ad hoc committee.
- B. The Ombuds will be initially appointed for a three-year term and will be granted a 25% reassigned workload for the position.
- C. Upon appointment, the Ombuds will complete the IOA's Foundations of the Organizational Ombuds Course. LU will cover the costs associated with completing this course designed for new Ombuds.
- D. Annually, the Ombuds will submit a report of his/her/their activities and accomplishments. All data in the annual report shall be presented in aggregate form to protect confidentiality.

E. The Ombuds performance will be reviewed annually by the President of the Faculty Senate, the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and the Provost.

VII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Responsible Party: Academic Policy Advisory Council

Review Schedule: Every three years on or before the date the policy was last revised and/or approved.

VIII. APPROVAL

Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Date

Lamar University President Date

POLICY LOG

Version	Date	Description of Changes
1	6/24/2024	Policy draft completed.
	11/20/2024	Reviews by constituency groups completed.
		Review by campus community completed.
		Policy approved by President.